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# GRANTnews

July 2018 | A periodic e-bulletin to share results of organ donation and transplantation projects funded by the Division of Transplantation.

## Social and Faith-based Interventions Increase Registration Rates among African Americans

Two projects added more than 500 donor registrations to the Michigan registry



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African Americans are disproportionately represented among the increasing number of Americans waiting for organ transplants. Two National Kidney Foundation of Michigan (NKFM) grant projects funded by the Division of Transplantation added new donor registrations and uncovered effective ways to reach African Americans. By the projects' end, there were an **additional 505 African American registrants** on the Michigan Organ Donor Registry.

### Strategies that work:

- Utilizing social and faith-based organizations such as churches, sororities, and fraternities to educate African Americans about donation
- Recruiting trusted leaders within the organizations and training them to educate and motivate others to donate



**NKFM, partnering with Gift of Life Michigan, the Detroit Minority Organ Tissue Transplant Education Program, and the University of Michigan, added 294 donor registrations** among alumni chapters of historically African American sororities and fraternities. They found that using peer health advisors to increase knowledge and discussion of organ and tissue donation in this population, in combination with providing tailored newsletters, was an effective way to increase donor registration. It boosted the odds of African Americans signing up for the donor registry by 45 percent compared to only passing out donor registration cards.

“Many people are skeptical and reluctant to discuss the topic of organ and tissue donation,” said Ann Andrews of NKFM. “African American sororities, fraternities, and churches are ideal settings for disseminating information about organ donation, and the spirit of competition between sororities and fraternities fosters action.”

The study created momentum among the fraternities and sororities and raised awareness about organ and tissue donation. According to Andrews, NKFM continues to receive calls to talk about donation at chapter events and health fairs they coordinate and sponsor.

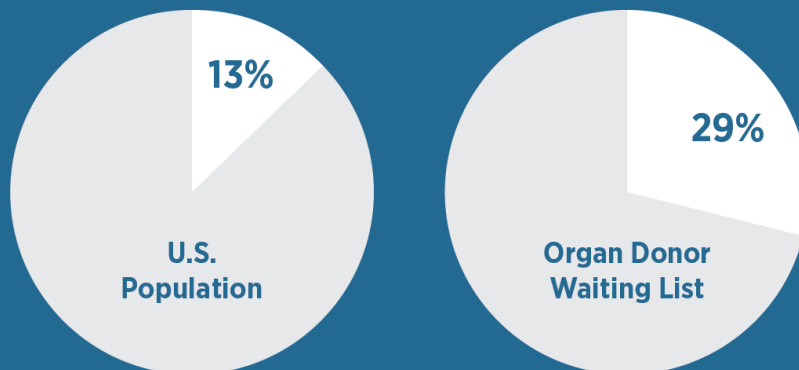
## **Churches are eager to share information**

**A second study conducted by NKFM, again partnering with Gift of Life Michigan, the Detroit MOTTEP, and the University of Michigan,** found that recruiting peer health advisors in African American churches to educate their fellow congregants about organ and tissue donation increased the likelihood that congregants would enroll in the donor registry by a factor of 11.

Peer health advisors in southeast Michigan churches gave a slide presentation about donation and showed *Living on Through Love*, a 32-minute DVD featuring a local African American donor family, organ recipient, transplant surgeon, and pastor, at church committee meetings and other church events. These churches also were encouraged to pick a Sunday for highlighting organ donation in church services and activities, ideally during National Donor Sabbath, celebrated two weekends before Thanksgiving each November. For this event, they were given toolkits with sample bulletin articles and pins that said “Ask Me ... about organ donation” for ushers to wear. Project staff attended the Sunday services and distributed Bible ribbons with a “donate life” message. Church members could register via the Michigan online registry or via a mail-in registry brochure.

The interventions resulted in **211 new donor registrations.**

**African Americans make up 13% of the U.S. population but they represent 29% of people waiting for an organ transplant.**



Although these findings were encouraging, rates were still lower than the demand requires, and more intensive interventions are needed to meet the need for organs. Andrews said NKFM has continued to refine this educational approach and the attitude survey questions for other settings, including dialysis centers, community-based chronic-disease self-management programs, and lifestyle-change programs.

“These churches are mission-driven and eager to share the information, once they learn about the need,” said NKFM’s Andrews.

Learn more about these projects using the resources below.

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## Want to know more?

### **Working through Churches – Body & Soul: A Celebration of Healthy Eating & Living - Organ Donation Module**

Principal Investigator: Ann Andrews, MPH, National Kidney Foundation of Michigan, [aandrews@nkfm.org](mailto:aandrews@nkfm.org), 734-222-9800

Principal Researcher: Ken Resnicow, PhD, University of Michigan School of Public Health, [kresnic@umich.edu](mailto:kresnic@umich.edu), 734-647-0212

Andrews AM, Zhang N, Magee JC, Chapman R, Langford AT, Resnicow K. Increasing donor designation through black churches: results of a randomized trial. *Progress in Transplantation*. 2012. Vol 22, No. 2: 161-167.

Resnicow K, Andrews AM, Zhang N, et al. Development of a scale to measure African American attitudes toward organ donation. *Journal of Health Psychology*. 2012. Vol. 17, No. 3: 389-98.

### **Working through Fraternities and Sororities – Take the Pledge to Save Lives: Social Motivation to Join the Michigan Organ Donor Registry**

Principal Investigator: Ann Andrews, MPH, National Kidney Foundation of Michigan, [aandrews@nkfm.org](mailto:aandrews@nkfm.org), 734-222-9800

Principal Researcher: Ken Resnicow, PhD, University of Michigan School of Public Health, [kresnic@umich.edu](mailto:kresnic@umich.edu), 734-647-0212

Andrews AM, Zhang N, Buechley C, Chapman R, Guillen JL, Magee JC, Resnicow K. Organ donation attitudes and practices among African Americans: an adapted measurement instrument. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*. 2016. Vol. 27, No. 3: 1397-1410.

Loughery C, Zhang N, Resnicow K, Chapman R, Magee JC, Andrews AM. Peer leaders increase organ donor designation among members of historically African American fraternities and sororities. *Progress in Transplantation*. In press.

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